

Review

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In a strange routine, Ruby often takes London aside and speaks to her privately. Ruby also says some rather strange things about how London happens to be there. There are some secrets here, dark secrets that are strange and frightening, and among these secrets there is the reservoir, its water rising up like a living, breathing thing that wants something—but what? We learn that Ruby will do anything for her sister, no matter what it is.

Imaginary Girls is a dark and chilling story of sisterhood and family. The character of Ruby is unforgettable. Chloe, who is the narrator, must navigate an obstacle course of hidden truths and can't come out the other side undamaged. As events turn more and more bizarre, Chloe attempts, unsuccessfully, to pretend everything is normal, but this is truly a nightmare, a nightmare more strange than frightening. It has a powerful beginning and will grip the reader's attention until the secrets are explained—at least some of them. This book is recommended for ages 14 and up.

Reviewed by Carol Masser, Arizona State University, Tempe, USA.



Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice

Phillip Hoose. 2009. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.

On March 2, 1955, 15-year-old Claudette Colvin refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama—nine months before Rosa

Parks engaged in the same act of civil disobedience. Inspired by discussions in school on Constitutional rights, Claudette allowed herself to be dragged off the bus by two Montgomery city policemen and arrested. What follows is a riveting account that alternates between Claudette's experiences and the Civil Rights movement that was spurred on by heroic actions like Claudette's.

Claudette's struggle did not end when the reverend from her church bailed her out of jail the night of her arrest. There was a mixed response from the African American community; some thought she

was courageous and others accused her of making things harder for everyone.

She also faced criminal charges for violating the segregation law, disturbing the peace, and "assaulting" the policemen involved in her arrest. Black leaders knew Claudette's not guilty plea to breaking a segregation law was of huge importance. The local chapter of the NAACP moved to raise money for Claudette's trial and secured a young lawyer, Fred Gray, to defend her.

Despite a solid defense, on March 18, 1955, the judge ruled Claudette guilty on all three charges. In May, when her case was appealed to the Montgomery Circuit Court, the judge dropped two of the charges, but not the assault charge. Montgomery's black leaders had hoped to take Claudette's case to the higher courts to challenge the constitutionality of the bus rules, but now this would not happen.

What followed was a dark period for Claudette. She had a permanent criminal record that would hamper her efforts to find a job or get into college. She felt alienated from her peers at school, and the black leaders decided an "emotional" adolescent from a poor, working-class neighborhood was not the appropriate role model for their cause. That summer, Claudette, depressed and looking for support, became pregnant.

Then on October 22, 1955, 18-year-old Mary Louise Smith refused to give up her seat as well. The black leaders in the community decided it was time for action. On December 2, 1955, in an organized event, Rosa Parks, a mature adult citizen, refused to give up her seat and was arrested by city police in a respectful manner.

The black activists flew into action, advocating that all black community members stop riding the buses in protest. What followed was a boycott that lasted 381 days and involved hundreds of citizens walking miles to work or catching rides in a community organized carpool. While some members of the white community supported this endeavor, others engaged in violence against the boycotters.

Inspired by the 1954 Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that segregated schools were unconstitutional, Fred Gray decided to pursue full integration of the bus system in the federal courts.

Undeterred by the fact that she had not heard from the activists in months, Claudette agreed to testify in the case with three other black women. Six weeks after Claudette gave birth, she found herself in a packed federal courtroom, courageously testifying about her experience.

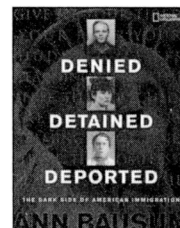
On June 19, 1956, two of the three judges ruled that the bus rules were unconstitutional and, in November, the Supreme Court upheld the ruling. The black community was ecstatic, and in an event publicized in the media, several leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King, freely chose where to sit on a bus. Claudette, however, was not called to be a part of this event and, over time, she was largely forgotten in history texts describing the movement sparked by her actions.

The text as a whole brings to life an important moment in history when a community—though not perfect in its treatment of all members—took action to change their world. The author, Phillip Hoose, extensively interviewed Claudette, her family, and friends.

The book is filled with images of artifacts like Claudette's arrest report, a handwritten list of every church that donated to Claudette's defense fund, and various newspaper articles detailing the events of the movement. The numerous photographs include pictures of African Americans walking to work during the boycott. There are sidebars with helpful information on related topics like other civil rights cases and the Montgomery Improvement Association's role in organizing the carpool.

Hoose's message in this award-winning book is that change can happen with perseverance and tenacity. Unfortunately, 55 years later, segregation is still an issue. It's not as transparent as "whites" and "colored" signs, but it exists. The question is whether the youths of today will take action, and whether the adults in their communities will rally around them to change their world. This book has the potential for propelling students forward into critical, potentially life-changing conversations.

Reviewed by Sunday Cummins, Reading and Language Department, National-Louis University, Lisle, Illinois, USA.



Denied, Detained, Deported: Stories From the Dark Side of American Immigration

Ann Bausum. 2009. National Geographic: Washington, DC.

In *Denied, Detained, Deported: Stories From the Dark Side of American*

Immigration, Bausum seeks to enlighten readers on the downfalls of U.S. immigration policy over the last 130 years. In each of five chapters, she highlights the story of one group that suffered from decisions made by the U.S. government. She begins with an "excluded" group—the Chinese immigrants who flocked to California to work in mines and fields and to build railroads during the 19th century.

When the labor market glutted, the Chinese immigrants became the focus of increased racism. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, ending immigration from China. If the mostly male population of Chinese immigrants returned to visit China, they would not be allowed to reenter the United States, and their families left behind in China would not be allowed to come to the United States. Those who remained in the United States suffered unfair taxes, boycotts of their businesses, and even being driven from communities at gunpoint.

In the early 20th century, the deported group included citizens and immigrants who spoke out publicly against unfair labor conditions, including 50-year-old Emma Goldman, whose family had moved to the United States from Russia when she was 16 years old. Goldman was a member of a group that advocated for anarchy, or the rights of the individual to rule themselves.

There is evidence the government intentionally stirred up support for the deportation of these activists in this period when society was alarmed by the development of communism in Russia. In the end, government authorities succeed in having the "Anarchist Queen," and others similarly accused, deported.

Just a few decades later, a group was denied entry to the United States. In 1939, the S.S. *St. Louis*, a ship with 908 Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Germany, was not allowed to dock in Florida. President Roosevelt, feeling the pressure of public opinion against allowing more refugees into the country, did not respond to messages from the crew of